

RISKY BUSINESS

Innovating in High-Risk
Environments



RISKY BUSINESS

A Toolkit for Catalyzing and Implementing True Innovation

Risky Business is a toolkit for conducting innovation workshops and planning for difficult conversations with individuals in risk-averse environments.

This toolkit is designed to work in any industry or workplace that is subject to risk-aversion, such as healthcare, government, higher education, banking, law, and more.

This toolkit is designed for practitioners that are experienced in design-driven innovation processes as well as those who are brand new to it.

The toolkit is broken into two phases.

- 1.** First, we provide a methodology for innovators to use in risk-averse environments to generate creative ideas.
- 2.** Next, we provide a framework for innovators to get buy-in on their ideas.

Important note:

Phase 01 and 02 of our toolkit are designed to build upon each other in one linear sequence, but can also be done and stand alone as separate exercises depending on where you are at in your own process.

Risky Business was created in partnership between the Children's Hospital Los Angeles and verynice. The toolkit is published by Reginald.

Total Time Required: ~3.5 Hours

Materials Required: Paper, pens, Post-It Notes, Laptop with access to either PowerPoint or Google Slides.

PHASE 01:

Generating Ideas in High-Risk Environments

The objective of Phase 01 of Risky Business is to provide a methodology for innovators to use in risk-averse environments to generate creative ideas.

For this session to work, you will need a facilitator along with key members of your team. We recommend 3-5 people in total, but this number is flexible.

The workshop can technically be done anywhere, but we recommend a closed environment to allow for honest conversation and minimal noise.

Before the Workshop

Recommended duration: 15–20 minutes

Before the workshop, there are a few things to do to get ready. Be sure to review the content in this toolkit thoroughly so that you know what to expect throughout the experience and feel prepared. The first thing you'll want to do is define the challenge and document your current understanding of the challenge. There are many ways designers and strategists frame problems and opportunities. To do this, we have provided a simple framework below, inspired by Dan Brown of EightShapes.

1. First, consider the primary audience or stakeholder that you are trying to solve a problem for. Indicate that stakeholder in the space below:

Stakeholder:

2. Identify the activity or “action” the stakeholder is trying to complete, along with the key pain point or problem they face when trying to take that action.

Action:

Pain Point:

3. Next, plug in these three things into the Problem Statement template below.

A [stakeholder] needs to [action], but [pain point].

For example: A doctor needs to meet with a patient, but the patient is not able to come to the hospital.

.....
.....

As an alternative or addition to this framework, you can also consider framing the idea as a "how might we" statement, or HMW.

HMWs are used by designers to pose simple questions that can serve as a kick-off to a brainstorm. HMWs are a powerful tool as they do not lead the brainstorm in a particular direction and instead provide an open-ended platform for thinking.

4. To create a HMW statement, take the core problem you are trying to solve, and tack it on to the template below:

How might we ?

For example, if we were to turn the problem statement from before into a problem statement, we might do something like this: How might we make it possible for a doctor to meet with a patient remotely?

Finally, before your workshop, it is important to understand who is coming to the meeting.

Review your guest list and for each individual participant, fill out the following persona form. It's possible you don't know this information about everyone. Do your best, and feel free to collaborate with colleagues on this.



Name: _____

Role/Occupation: _____

Common Challenges:

Roadblocks they impose:

Do this for each workshop attendee.

Take a look at the **example below** to have a sense for how to approach the template:

Name: Ashley

Role/Occupation: CEO

Common Challenges:

Desire to keep the board of directors happy with the progress of the company while also maintaining a healthy work environment for employees, and staying on budget.

Roadblocks they impose:

Very hands-on as a leader, and insists on having the final word/say on every decision. A tendency to micromanage employees, and doesn't like to allow others to run a meeting.

The Workshop

Recommended duration: between 2-2.5 hours.

Preparation:

For the workshop, you'll need paper, pens, Post-It Notes, and a computer with access to either PowerPoint or Google Slides.



Part 01: Introduction

Recommended duration: 10 minutes.

To begin, ask each individual participant to take a moment and reflect on the following question. Let them know in advance that they will be asked to share these out loud and discuss.

- 1. Do you consider yourself to be risk-averse? Or open to risk?**
- 2. In what aspects of your own life are you most risk-averse?**
- 3. In what aspects of your work are you most risk-averse?**

After everyone has had a chance to reflect, facilitate a discussion around each of these three questions. Take note of any surprises along the way. This activity serves as an initial icebreaker, but also as a chance for all of the participants to get to know each other.

*If you have a group of **five or less**, you may choose to have everyone share their responses to these questions out loud. If you have a group **larger than five people**, you may choose to have participants share with a partner, and then share major takeaways with the group as a whole.*

Next, it's time to get people open and ready to think in out-of-the-box ways. We have two activities to do just that.

Part 02: Scary Stuff

Recommended duration: 5 minutes.

Spark a fun conversation with the following prompt:

Share a story with the person next to you about the scariest thing you've ever done that was ultimately worth it.

Part 03: Moon Mall

Recommended duration: 5 minutes.

The next activity is designed to ease the participants into the practice of generating ideas. This activity in particular requests that participants generate a wide range of ideas for something that is seemingly unrelated to what you are working on. Make sure that you have a pen and some Post-It Notes ready to go.

To begin, read the following out-loud:

"We just landed on the moon, and we're building our first mall. As a group, it is our mission to come up with 26 ideas in response to the following prompt: How should people pay for things in the mall? "

For example, pay by doing a dance... pay by showing pictures of what life is like on Earth.

As answers are shared, quickly write them down on a Post-It Note, and stick it to the wall. Do this until you have 26 ideas total. Challenge everyone to think fast! You want to facilitate a culture of gut-reaction thinking.

Part 04: Case Studies

Recommended duration: 5 minutes.

Next, share at least two of the following case studies. Each of these are examples of seemingly risky, but actually successful ideas. As you share the first part of the case study (premise), have the group pick apart all of the reasons that the idea could fail. Then, reveal the success story.

Case Study 01: Lucky Fish

Premise: In an effort to reduce iron deficiency, Lucky Fish thought to create a block of iron in the shape of a fish that can be placed in a soup or stew when cooking.

Success Story: It worked! "Lucky Iron Fish has been developed specifically to combat iron deficiency anemia for everyone, including athletes, vegetarians, vegans, women and mothers."

Case Study 02: Increasing Compliance with Eye Sight Testing in Rural Schools

Premise: In an effort to increase the amount of students completing eye exams in rural school districts, the idea of encouraging kids to test each other's eyesight came up.

Success Story: It worked! The kids previously didn't like the teachers doing it, and the fun of having a friend perform the test was distracting from the fear.

Case Study 03: Advocating for LGBT Rights

Premise: In an effort to advocate for LGBT rights, the idea of having football players wear rainbow shoelaces on their boots came up.

Success Story: It worked! Organized by Stonewall UK, the rainbow laces became a viral sensation for football teams across the UK.

Part 05: Reflection and Challenge

Recommended duration: 10 minutes.

Next, discuss as a group the following.

- 1. In what ways are we innovative?**
- 2. In our industry, what are the businesses that are the most creative or innovative?**
- 3. What makes them that way?**

After discussing the internal culture and relationship to creativity and innovation, present the challenge that you prepared in the "Before the Workshop" section, including the problem statement, the how might we statement, and any additional context that is necessary to bring people up to speed.

Part 06: Brainstorm

Recommended duration: up to 70 minutes.

Now it is time to brainstorm. This activity challenges the participants to come up with a solution to the challenge that is incredibly impractical. To begin, have each participant write down as many ideas as possible (each on separate Post-It Notes) in response to the prompt:

Imagine we have unlimited money and resources to invest in this initiative, come up with a ridiculous solution to our challenge.

Allocate up to 5 minutes for this part.

Put all of the ideas up on a wall, and begin selecting them at random to read out loud. After you've shared them all, have the team determine the top three. You can do this in any way you'd like, but we recommend giving everyone a moment to come up to the wall, review the ideas, and draw a dot or a star on the idea they find the most ridiculous. *Allocate up to 5 minutes for this part.*

Then, for each of the top three, use the templates on the following pages to make the ideas more and more practical. *Allocate up 30 minutes total to complete the following templates.*

Idea 01:

Three risks:

Risk 01

Risk 02

Risk 03

What we can do to mitigate each risk:

What we can do 01

What we can do 02

What we can do 03

Revised idea:

Idea 02:

Three risks:

Risk 01

Risk 02

Risk 03

What we can do to mitigate each risk:

What we can do 01

What we can do 02

What we can do 03

Revised idea:

Idea 03:

Three risks:

Risk 01

Risk 02

Risk 03

What we can do to mitigate each risk:

What we can do 01

What we can do 02

What we can do 03

Revised idea:

After you've completed the above for each of your top three ideas, it's time to narrow things down and refine. As a team, decide which one of the three revised ideas you would like to eliminate. This will result in just two of your three ideas moving on to the next and final phase. For each of those two ideas, dig deeper by populating the following template. *Allocate up to 20 minutes total to complete this template for your two final ideas.*

Desirability:	Who would want this solution most? Who would want it least?
Idea 01	Idea 02
Feasibility:	What would the timeline for the solution look like? Is the solution possible to implement with existing resources? Who or what else needs to be involved?
Idea 01	Idea 02
Viability:	Would this solution be sustainable?
Idea 01	Idea 02

As a group, discuss each idea and determine which one you would like to move forward into the last phase of the workshop. Keep in mind it is OK to iterate upon the idea or adjust it. That is exactly the purpose of digging into the questions in our template. *Allocate up to 5 minutes to complete this discussion.*

Part 07: The Pitch

Recommended duration: 30 minutes.

When it comes to pitching an idea, faculty at the [USC Iovine and Young Academy](#) have developed an amazing method known as “**TOAST**”. The best part? It only requires five slides. Create one slide for each of the following sections. Remember not to include too much text!

1. Transparency:

What is the problem you've identified?

Whose problem is it?

Why are you or your team the right person/people to take on this project?

2. Opportunity:

What is your idea, and how does this relate to the problem you've identified?

What is the nature of your artifact?

3. Analysis:

What else is out there, also dealing with this problem?

How is your idea different?

4. Strategy:

What would be your first/next steps in tackling this project?

What resources will you require to fulfill the needs of this project, and how will you acquire those?

5. Transformation:

What does success look like for this project?

What will the world look like in 10 years, because of this project?

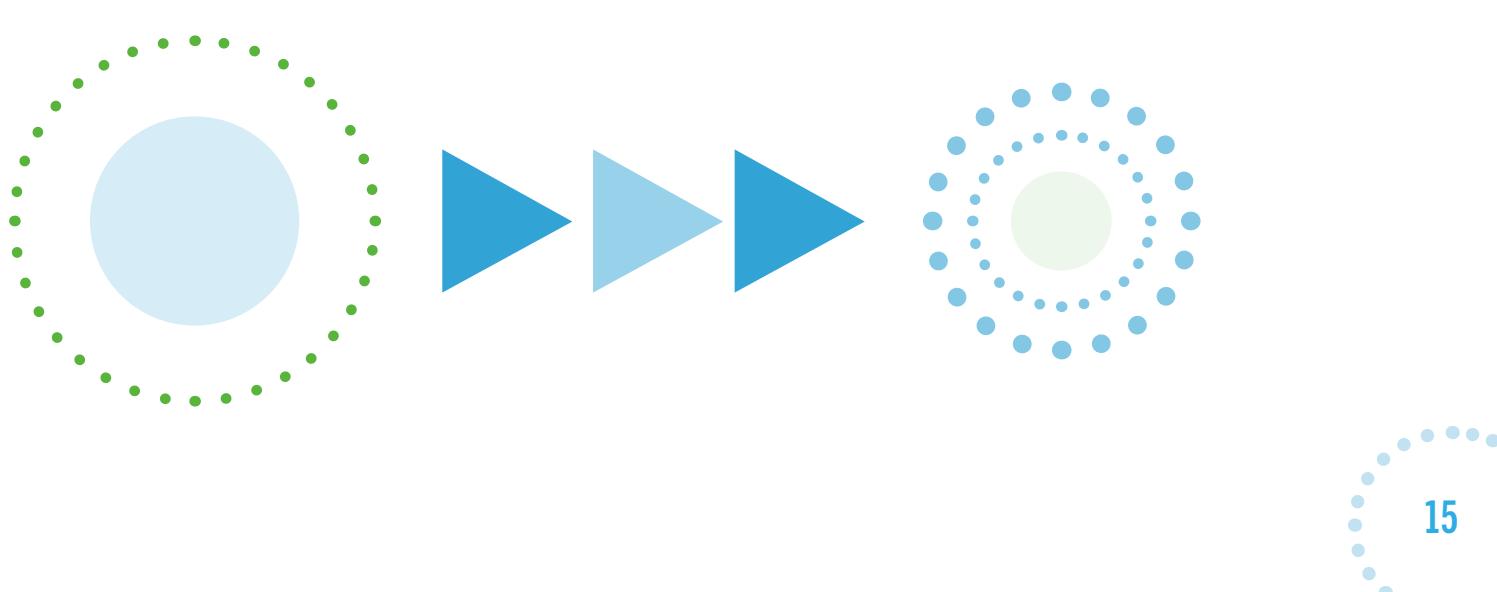
Part 08: Report Out

Recommended duration: 10 minutes.

Once you've created your five slides, it's time to walk through them all as a group and see what you came to! After sharing, feel free to discuss any edits before moving on to Phase 02 of the toolkit.



MOVING ON TO PHASE 02



PHASE 02:

Getting Buy-In In Risk-Averse Environments

Recommended duration: ~45–60 minutes

The objective of Phase 02 of our toolkit is to provide a framework for innovators to get buy-in from risk-averse leaders.

Depending on the time available in your session, this part of the toolkit can be done alone by the facilitator, or can be completed collaboratively as a group at the end of your workshop session.

The framework consists of three simple worksheets to help you make the case for the exact idea you generated during Phase 01, or for another idea that may already be in the works.

Phase 02 consists of three worksheets:

1. The Decision Maker

Activity: Build a profile for the decision maker.

Total Time Required: 15 minutes.

2. Developing the Idea

Activity: Explore how your idea or idea may be refined in order to address any key insights or discoveries from Worksheet 01.

Total Time Required: 10 minutes.

3. Refining the Pitch

Activity: Finally, it's time to refine the pitch. For each of the following, write one single sentence. After you've finished, practice out-loud and consider getting feedback from a colleague before taking this to the decision maker.

Total Time Required: 25 minutes.

WORKSHEET 01: The Decision Maker

Recommended duration: 15 minutes

First, build a profile for the decision maker. Who are they? What is their role in your organization? What common challenges do they face, and what roadblocks have they historically imposed? What kind of mindset do they have when it comes to desires and fears?

Who is the decision maker?

Name:

Role/Occupation:

Common challenges:

Roadblocks they impose:

Continues on the next page...

What are the greatest desires of the decision maker?

How might this idea align with the greatest desires of the decision maker?

How might this idea fail to contribute to the greatest desires of the decision maker?

What are the greatest fears of the decision maker?

How might this idea contribute to the greatest fears of the decision maker?

How might this idea mitigate the greatest fears of the decision maker?

WORKSHEET 02: Developing the Idea

Recommended duration: 10 minutes

Next, explore how your idea or idea may be refined in order to address any key insights or discoveries from Worksheet 01.

How might your idea be refined to address the concerns that may have been raised in Worksheet 01?

What are the next steps required to bring this idea to life?

What are the current questions or unknowns about this idea?

WORKSHEET 03: Refining the Pitch

Recommended duration: 25 minutes

Finally, it's time to refine the pitch. For each of the following, write one single sentence. After you've finished, practice out-loud and consider getting feedback from a colleague before taking this to the decision maker.

The idea:

The way in which the idea contributes to the desires of the decision maker

The way in which the idea mitigates the fears of the decision maker

The current questions/unknowns

Continues on the next page...

The way(s) in which those questions/unknowns will be addressed

The next steps

Now that you've broken this down, you can choose to put together some slides, or even just prepare some talking points. **If you'd like, you can also consider referencing the template, below, to help you prepare for your meeting.**

Our idea is [the idea].

This gets us closer to being able to [the way in which the idea contributes to the desires of the decision maker], and [the way in which the idea mitigates the fears of the decision maker].

What we still have left to know about our idea is [the current questions/unknowns], but those unknowns will be addressed by [the way(s) in which those questions/unknowns will be addressed].

Our next steps are [the next steps].





YOU DID IT!

Thanks for downloading *Risky Business*!

If this was valuable for you, please consider sharing our download link. While the toolkit is available on a pay-what-you-want basis, we highly encourage donating.

50% of the proceeds from this toolkit will go directly to support special initiatives at Children's Hospital Los Angeles!

If you'd like any additional guidance on anything in this toolkit, please do not hesitate to reach out to info@verynice.co. We'll be happy to help clarify anything and make additional suggestions.



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CHLA Marks provided courtesy of Children's Hospital Los Angeles.